

AMATEUR — PRO RELATIONS OF GOLF UNIQUE IN SPORTS

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They had just holed out at Augusta National after the second round of the Masters tournament in April. The young amateur, a college student, had played well but had failed to make the 36-hole cut-off, and he was crestfallen.

One of his fellow-competitors, a seasoned touring professional, attested the amateur's card, handed it over to him, and said, "You certainly played a lot of fine shots. Now keep working at your game, and you'll get there pretty soon. I enjoyed the round with you — thanks a lot."

The young amateur brightened. He began to see things from a little broader perspective. Now he need not cut his throat; after all, lots of fellows must have failed to survive the Masters 36-hole dividing line on their first try.

That little episode expresses the wholesome relationship between amateur and professional which is typical in golf.

It is a relationship rare in sport — rare not so much for its friendly nature but because the amateur can always compete seriously with the professional, either at scratch or with the help of a handicap. And yet the nature of their competition (what pro wants to lose to an amateur?) never seems to affect their friendliness.

On the other hand, the imagination rebels in trying to picture the New York Yankees playing a serious game with a college baseball team, or Pancho Gonzalez being extended to his limit by a member of our Davis Cup tennis team.

Furthermore, in some games the

relationship between amateur and professional is affected by a legalism — the amateur's purity of status is "contaminated" if he plays against professionals.

But golf from the beginning has had its open competitions — open to amateurs as well as pros. In the USGA's first National Open in 1895, A. W. Smith, an amateur from Toronto, tied for third place, three strokes away from the winner. Just last year Charles Coe finished a stroke shy of tying the Masters winner. Jack Nicklaus, when an amateur, finished second in the National Open in 1960 and tied for fourth last year.

Club Pro, Members

The relationship is even more conspicuous in golf club life. The pro plays more or less regularly with the members and, golf being an essentially sociable game, fun and friendship are usually the keynote. Employer-employee relations in other fields are not ever thus. But golf has a way of minimizing differences between people.

Given such a spirit at the grass roots of the game, it was only natural that there should develop a good relation between the Professional Golfers' Association of America and the United States Golf Association — between the organization of the individual professionals and the agency of the clubs where most of the professionals work.

The two organizations consult often on matters of mutual concern. In modern times, starting with Horton Smith in 1954, the PGA President has been invited to meet with the USGA Executive Committee annually at its

January meeting. Since 1957 PGA representatives have conferred with USGA officials at the time of the National Open concerning the Rules of Golf and tournament matters. In February, 1962, John M. Winters, Jr., USGA President; Wm. Ward Foshay, a Vice-President, and the Executive Director met with the PGA Executive Committee in Florida.

Much understanding has resulted. Much good can always come of much understanding.

Go back to 1926 and you will find George Sargent, PGA President, proposing a widespread series of Sectional Qualifying Rounds for the National Open — a system that was adopted and has been used ever since.

Go back to 1928 and you will find the PGA — a young organization — pressed for funds to send a Ryder Cup Team abroad the next year for the first overseas match in the series. You will find the USGA giving a helping hand with a contribution of \$500.

Go back to 1895 and you will find that prize money for professionals really started with the USGA's first National Open Championship — the winner received a \$50 gold medal and \$150 cash.

All this has been typical of the best aspects of the USGA's relations with the PGA.

Not All Sweetness

Now lest it be assumed that all has been sweetness and light between the two organizations, it must be recorded that there have been dark moments. Last year when the PGA Tournament Committee unexpectedly announced certain "trial" rules for its circuit tournaments, the USGA was quick to deplore such a departure from the Rules of Golf. The USGA requested the PGA to abandon the experiments as being contrary to the best interests of golf. Even today the USGA, while recognizing the merit of some of the PGA "trial" rules, is unhappy over their continuance because

of the confusion they create in the minds of golfers generally. The USGA is convinced that one code, and only one code, is essential for the good of the game.

But exceptions such as that only emphasize the unusual and healthy amateur-professional relationship in golf.

It is taken for granted in club affairs. The pro is a teacher not only of strokes but of sportsmanship to youngsters — a leading interpreter of the Rules of Golf to the members — in many cases, a sort of high priest of the mysteries of the cult of golf. At the top of this little list must be placed his influence as a character-builder of juniors. Many a leading citizen today can testify that some of his best lessons in sportsmanship — in growing out of selfishness into bigness of character — were learned at golf from another citizen who served in quiet modesty, as the club pro.

There was a day when the amateur was identified in tournament records by the title "Mr.;" that day is long gone.

There was a day when the pro did not enter the clubhouse at many clubs; now, after appropriate service, he is sometimes elected an honorary member.

Now why should all this be? Why should an employee or an independent contractor — a man who earns his living from the game — have a status which prompts his employers, or his customers, to hold him in the unusual regard which is the lot of most good club pros?

It is because the pro, for all his commercialism, is an overgrown amateur at heart. To be sure, he is in the game as a business, but he is also in it for real love of it — and an amateur is one who does something for love of it. He is in the game as a sportsman — and that is his chief stock in trade. Should he lose the element of sportsmanship, he

would lose his present position.

Macdonald Smith won an open tournament many years ago and at the prize-giving was presented with a check. "But where's the medal?" Mac asked. "It's a medal play tournament." A medal hadn't been provided, but so badly did Mac want a permanent token of his victory that one was later made for him.

Here is part of a letter recently received by the USGA from Leo Fraser, President of the Philadelphia Section of the PGA:

"I have just re-read the USGA Rules of Amateur Status. I suppose all these rules are the culmination of many years of attention to the important subject — and how very important it is when one considers the many opportunities that arise to tempt amateur golfers today.

"Without knowing the temptations and other 'fringe benefits' that could be gained by some pseudo-amateurs, an inexperienced person might read into these rules some very harsh measures, but as a professional for nearly thirty-five years it is very gratifying to be part of a game whose ruling body has tried and does try to keep the status of amateur golf at the proper level."

The USGA amateur code makes a sharp distinction between amateur and professional, and this is best for both. Hypocrisy is not generally present in golf.

A Different Class

In relatively recent years a rather new class of professional has come conspicuously to the fore. The tournament professional often does not have a club connection, yet he exerts a tremendous influence on the game through his example week after week, all over the country. His numbers are not large but his effect on golfers' playing manners is considerable.

Characteristic of tournaments on the professional circuit is the voluntary labors of the amateurs who make the tournaments possible, in large measure. Heads of businesses serve as marshals, lawyers help with the score-keeping, stock-brokers sell tickets. They contribute thousands of man hours toward preparations, all without money recompense. If they had to be paid for their services, the tournament circuit would be quite different, if it existed at all.

So we ask the old question once more — Now why should all this be? Why should amateurs give endless hours of free labor toward helping the business of a professional?

The answer is still the same — because of love of golf. It was, as we saw, a big reason why the pro became a pro in the first place. It is the reason why the amateur does what he does for the pro's tournaments.

And if you look closely enough, you will see it to be the force that binds together all of golf's diverse elements into a rare unity. For golfers respect their game, and they therefore respect one another.

Canine Chicanery

Club members in Westerhope, Northumberland, England, believe that trained hunting dogs are being used to steal golf balls, reports *Golf Illustrated* of London.

The club president said, "The thieves — and the dogs — are amazingly efficient. It was some time before anyone connected the fantastic disappearance of golf balls with dogs wandering on the course."

The "huntmen" have never been spotted but golfers sometimes have heard a soft call of "Fetch it!" from the bushes. They are fast, too. One player was searching for his lost ball when a friend happened by. The friend had bought the player's ball on his way into the course area.